

Musculoskeletal System Exercises & Stretches

Your musculoskeletal system includes your bones and joints and your muscle system. These two systems work together to provide basic functions that are essential to life. Daily work routines can often result in overuse and repetitive injuries. By following the exercise and stretches below will help to reduce your risk of these injuries.

Deep Breathing

1. While standing, or in an otherwise relaxed position
2. Place one hand on the abdomen and one on the chest
3. Inhale slowly through the nose
4. Hold for 4 seconds
5. Exhale slowly through the mouth
6. Repeat

Cable Stretch

1. While sitting with chin in, stomach in, shoulders relaxed, hands relaxed in lap, and feet flat on the floor, imagine a cable pulling the head upward
2. Hold for 3 seconds and relax
3. Repeat 3 times

Sidebend: Neck Stretch

1. Tilt head to one side (ear towards shoulder)
2. Hold for 15 seconds
3. Relax
4. Repeat 3 times on each side



Diagonal Neck Stretch

1. Turn head slightly and then look down as if looking in your pocket
2. Hold for 15 seconds
3. Relax
4. Repeat 3 times on each side



Shoulder Shrug

1. Slowly bring shoulders up to the ears and hold for approx 3 seconds
2. Rotate shoulders back and down
3. Repeat 10 times



Executive Stretch

1. While sitting, lock hands behind head
2. Bring elbows back as far as possible
3. Inhale deeply while leaning back and stretching
4. Hold for 20 seconds
5. Exhale and relax
6. Repeat 1 time



Foot Rotation



1. While sitting, slowly rotate each foot from the ankle
2. Rotate 3 times in one direction, then 3 times in the opposite direction
3. Relax
4. Repeat 1 time



Hand Shake

1. While sitting, drop arms to the side
2. Shake hands downward gently
3. Repeat frequently

Hand Message (Note: Perform very gently)

1. Massage the inside and outside of the hand using the thumb and fingers
2. Repeat frequently (including before beginning work)

Finger Message (Note: Perform very gently)

1. Massage fingers of each hand individually, slowly, and gently
2. Move toward nail gently
3. Massage space between fingers
4. Perform daily

Wrist Stretch

1. Hold arm straight out in front of you
2. Pull the hand backwards with the other hand, then pull downward
3. Hold for 20 seconds
4. Relax
5. Repeat 3 times each



Some portions adapted from: Office of Research Services, Division of Safety, National Institutes of Health